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FISKE FUND PRIZE DISSERTATIONS OF THE RHODE ISLAND MEDICAL SOCIETY.—NO. II.

BY DAVID KING, JR., M.D. NEWPORT.

"What are the causes and nature of PURPURA HÆMORRHAGICA, and the best mode of treatment to be employed therein?"

[Continued from page 236.]

CASE IV.*—The patient, æt. 12, was scrofulous, having a chronic disease in her left wrist. June 21, a spot appeared on her under lip, like the mark from a pen, and the next morning similar ones were seen studded over her legs and arms. She walked to Mr. Wood's house (about a mile's distance), with ease. Some opening medicine was ordered. Mr. W. found her the next day sitting by the fire, her pulse good, and unconscious of ailment. Salts were given. At 10 at night she had some milk and bread, and soon afterwards went to the water-closet, and again betwixt 3 and 4, A. M., when she was extremely faint and giddy. There was severe pain in the right temple, and distressing sickness supervened. What she vomited was tinged with blood, and her gums now bled readily. Most alarming languor and exhaustion succeeded; the tendency to vomit continued; the pulse was scarcely perceptible; symptoms of oppressed brain manifested themselves, and at 3, P. M., she died comatose.

Dissection.—Surface, as before described. The pericranium and dura mater were covered with petechial spots. On removing the membrane, the effects of large effusion of blood were evident. In the right templar region, a firm coagulum, floating in bloody serum, had forced its way through the broken-down brain into the ventricle. The serous membranes of the chest and abdomen were studded throughout with dark livid spots.

Several cases of purpura hæmorrhagica, with a detailed account of the appearances after death, will be found in the work of Rayer, under the article Hémacélinose. The results of these post-mortem examinations we have stated previously.

Several pathologists have endeavored to investigate the pathology of the fluids, in this disease, but as yet no satisfactory results have been obtained.

* Case of Purpura Hæmorrhagica. By W. Wood. Edinburgh, Medico-Chirurgical Transactions, vol. 1. See London Medico-Chirurgical Review, vol. vi. pp. 196.

The following is the result of an analysis of the urine of a patient affected with purpura hæmorrhagica. This case is related in the Transactions of the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Edinburgh, vol. 1, pp. 671, by Ebenezer Gairdner, M.D.

"No. 1, voided on 2d May, at half past 2 o'clock, P. M., was of a brown color, without smell. On standing, it deposited a precipitate of a dark color, while the superior part of the fluid was of a dirty pale yellow color, and turbid. When the urine was shaken it resumed the original brown appearance; and a portion of it, that was set aside, after eighteen hours standing was still without smell.

"*Experiments.*—1. Litmus paper was stained slightly red.—2. A dense white coagulum was produced by a heat of 180°.—3. Diluted nitric acid and alcohol produced a similar coagulum.—4. Corrosive muriate of mercury caused an abundant white precipitate.—5. Lime-water produced a very slight precipitate.—6. Potash did not cause any precipitate.—7. One fluid drachm contained 2 1-2 grains of solid matter; the urine contained 1-24th part of solid contents.—8. A slight precipitate was produced in the clear liquid, by the corrosive muriate and infusion of gall.—9. The clear liquid contained a considerable portion of a coloring matter, and but a small quantity of phosphoric salt, with no urea.

"Nos. 2 and 3, voided at 5 and half past 5 o'clock, P. M. of 2d May, differed principally from No. 1, in containing more free acid and less albuminary matter, the urine containing only 1-27th part of solid contents.

"In the 8th experiment, the precipitate was rather more copious, indicating the presence of gelatine and mucus.

"In the 9th experiment, also, the appearances were rather more distinct.

"Dr. Combe has shown, in his case of purpura,* that there was an excess of albumen, with a deficiency of urea, similar somewhat, in this respect, to the present case."

II. The striking characteristic of this disease, is the general hæmorrhagic tendency. It seems evident, therefore, that some light will be thrown on its nature by considering the pathology of hæmorrhage.

A difference of opinion exists among pathologists in relation to the mode in which spontaneous hæmorrhage takes place.

One class of pathologists suppose it to arise from the rupture of bloodvessels. Thus hæmoptysis was considered by the older writers, and is regarded now by some modern, as attributable to ruptured bloodvessels. The error of this explanation is fully proved by the fact, that no ruptured bloodvessels discover themselves on examination after death, and in some cases no morbid appearance in the mucous membrane lining the bronchiæ. The same reasoning is true in regard to the hæmorrhages from the other mucous membranes; no erosion of bloodvessels and no cicatrices being revealed by post-mortem examination.

Another class of pathologists attribute spontaneous hæmorrhage to debility and relaxation of the capillaries, in connection with excessive

* Edinburgh Med. and Surg. Journal, No. 66.

momentum of the blood. The advocates of this doctrine disregard the great discovery of Bichat—the distinction between the vascular circulation and the capillary circulation. The vascular circulation is maintained by the propulsive power of the heart, direct from the arteries, through certain capillaries, to the veins. But the portal circulation, and the lymphatic, cannot be explained on the principles of hydraulics. The reasonings of Bichat, that the capillary and parenchymatous circulation is maintained by inherent forces of its own, are unanswerable. Hence the true pathology of the circulating system must be based on the doctrine of physiology, which admits of two kinds of circulation. 1st. The direct circulation performed by the heart. 2d. The capillary or parenchymatous circulation, performed by inherent and vital forces of its own. The doctrine which ascribes hæmorrhage to the vis a tergo of the heart's action, is disproved by these last results of physiological discovery. Spontaneous hæmorrhage takes place, not from those capillaries which belong to the direct circulation maintained by the heart, but from those capillaries which belong to the parenchymatous circulation. The latter circulation is maintained, not by mechanical forces, but by vital forces. Its pathological phenomena must be explained, therefore, not on the principles of mechanics, but on those of vitality.

The third class of pathologists regard spontaneous hæmorrhage as an exhalation of blood, produced by an alteration of the vital forces of the capillaries or exhalents. This pathology of hæmorrhage was first advanced by Bichat, who sustains it by unanswerable arguments. As physiology and pathology advance, the doctrine which ascribes hæmorrhage to a morbid and vital act of the exhalents and capillaries, will prevail more and more over those which disregard the distinction between vital laws and the laws which govern inanimate matter. The mechanical doctrines of spontaneous hæmorrhage, while unsupported by facts, carry our science back to the days when the human body was regarded as a machine, governed by chemical and mechanical laws. The great truths, discovered by Bichat, should not in this day of improvement be thus trampled upon.

Now, purpura hæmorrhagica is characterized, in the great majority of instances, by a disposition to hæmorrhage, in the external and internal tegumentary tissues, in the skin and mucous membranes. In some cases, this hæmorrhagic disposition extends to the serous membranes; and in a few rare instances it affects the parenchymatous structure of the different organs, and prevails in all the tissues which enter into the composition of the organs of the economy. The whole phenomena of the disease, the general hæmorrhagic irritation, and obvious derangement of the great secreting viscera, evince that the source of this disease cannot properly be ascribed to any one organ, or its morbid sympathies, but rather to some part of the system which has a pervading influence, and a powerful control over the functions of the organic life.

In an interesting case of purpura hæmorrhagica, which came under my observation in the summer of 1834, the only probable cause which could be assigned to the disease, was the patient's exposure to putrid exhalations arising from decayed cisterns, in which vegetable and animal

matter was undergoing decomposition. The patient, a little girl, was pale, exangious, emaciated, and seemed to have suffered from want of food; but on inquiry, I ascertained that she had been supplied with a sufficient quantity of food, and of proper quality. What, then, could have interrupted the processes of nutrition, and produced the general depression, and hæmorrhagic disposition in the system? It seems perfectly accordant with sound pathological doctrines, and true physiological principles, to suppose, that in this case the putrid exhalations, to which the patient had been exposed, produced a morbid state of the organic nerves, and through the agency of these, that derangement of nutrition, of secretion, and of the whole vascular system, which characterize the disease.

The anatomical and functional relations of the ganglionic nerves, would seem to point out that portion of the nervous system as chiefly implicated in. *purpura hæmorrhagica*.

It is the function of the organic nerves, distributed throughout the vascular and capillary systems, to impart vitality to the blood, to maintain its circulation in the parenchyma of the different organs, to preside over nutrition, secretion, and the vital processes constantly going on in the intimate texture of the organs of the economy.

The hæmorrhagic irritation, which, in *purpura hæmorrhagica*, prevails more or less in the different tissues and organs, can only have its seat in the organic nerves distributed to the capillaries. Again, the symptoms of this disease evince a general functional disturbance in those organs, and an interruption of the processes of secretion and nutrition, over which the organic nerves preside.

The researches of Dr. Stoker and others, have shown the almost invariable occurrence, in this disease, of morbid alterations of the blood. From their anatomical and physiological relations, the organic nerves cannot remain in a normal state whilst the blood is diseased.

The anatomical connections of the ganglionic system with the cerebro-spinal system of nerves, especially the inosculation of the par vagum with the solar plexus, show how the primary irritation of the ganglionic nerves may be aggravated by the depressing passions; and how, consecutively, may be produced the prostration of mind, the loss of muscular energy, the pains in the back, loins, and limbs, and the other symptoms of cerebro-spinal affection, which usually attend this disease.

Whether the primary link in the chain of morbid actions consists in an affection of the organic nerves, or in a morbid condition of the blood, future investigations in regard to the predisposing and exciting causes of this disease will indicate. The effects of putrid vegetable and animal matter, when injected into the bloodvessels, as illustrated in the experiments of MM. Gaspard and Magendie, evince that primary morbid irritation of the organic nerves, distributed throughout the vascular and capillary systems, is capable of producing, not only the phenomena of fever, but morbid alterations of the blood, and sanguineous effusion from the capillaries in the mucous membrane and in the intimate structure of the viscera. One of the effects of animal poison, on this class of nerves,

is illustrated in Lucan's description of the general hæmorrhage produced by the bite of the hæmorrhoid, a Libyan serpent.

"Impressit dentes Hæmorrhoidis aspera Tullio
Magnanimo juveni, miratorique Catonis.
Utque solet pariter totis effundere signis
Corycii pressura croci : sic omnia membra
Emissere simul rutilum pro sanguine virus.
Sanguis erant lacrymæ quæcunque foramina novit
Humor, ab his largus manat cruor : ora redundat,
Et patulæ nares : Sudor rubet : omnia plenis,
Membra fluunt venis : Totum est provulnere corpus."
LUCAN'S PHARSALIA. Lib. ix. ver. 806.

Diagnosis.—Purpura hæmorrhagica is easily recognized by its two leading characteristics, the petechiæ and ecchymoses on the skin, and the hæmorrhages from the mucous membranes. We leave the question in regard to the difference between this affection and scurvy, or their identity, to be determined by future investigations.

Prognosis.—The prognosis of this disease is very uncertain. The following remarks are taken from the valuable work of Rayer. "L'hémacélinose indépendante de toute complication, offre un danger proportionné à la quantité de sang perdu dans les hémorrhagies, qui ont lieu simultanément ou successivement sous la peau et dans son épaisseur, à la surface ou dans le tissu des membranes muqueuses, au-dessous des membranes séreuses et dans le parenchyme des viscères. D'ailleurs la gravité de ces hémorrhagies varie, suivant l'importance des tissus ou des organes affectés. L'existence antérieure ou le développement accidentel d'une maladie, du poumon, du cœur, des organes digestifs, etc., rendent le pronostic plus fâcheux et le traitement plus difficile."

Treatment.—It is impossible to form precise rules of treatment in this disease. It is evident that it assumes a great variety of forms; that though it has its invariable and distinctive characteristics, yet the degree of constitutional energy accompanying each particular case, and the morbid states with which it may be associated, vary to an indefinite extent. Hence in considering the treatment of this disease, it will be proper to take such general views as pathological research justifies; not confining our attention to its inflammatory states with Parry, or to its states of depressed vital power with Willan.

A professed nosologist might consider this disease under its sthenic and asthenic forms. But in the present state of our knowledge of purpura hæmorrhagica, such a division would not contribute to accuracy in the adaptation of remedial measures to the different pathological states which accompany its various forms.

From a review of recorded cases, it would seem that the following indications may arise to be fulfilled in different cases of purpura hæmorrhagica. 1st. To diminish plethora, and remove inflammatory or congestive tendencies. 2d. To remove the hæmorrhagic disposition, which, in our opinion, is owing to an irritability, or change in the organic action of the ganglial nerves distributed to the capillary system. 3d. To restore the secretions, particularly the hepatic. 4th. To raise the vital energies, and impart force to the capillary system.

1st. To diminish plethora, and remove inflammatory and congestive tendencies.

Plethora, accompanied by inflammation or congestion, attends this disease in its more active forms. Hence Parry was led to regard it an inflammatory disease, and Bateman a congestive disease. Blood-letting is the great remedy, where such symptoms manifest themselves.

If the disease occur in adults, whose sanguineous system is largely developed, who are at once plethoric and robust, whose previous living has been substantial, who have enjoyed exercise in the open air; and if, to these circumstances of age, constitution and previous habits, there be added symptoms of local determination, either to the head, thorax, or abdomen, or if the pulse be firm and hard, or evince that the system is laboring under a load which oppresses it, the practitioner has only to follow in the steps of Parry, and subdue the disease by blood-letting.

The indications for blood-letting may not be so evident in other cases of the disease; the pulse may be feeble and frequent, and yet the signs of excessive congestion clear—the patient being affected with cough, dyspnoea, and pains in the thorax, or with symptoms of cerebral congestion, or of congestion in the portal circle. Now in the treatment of such cases, two errors may arise, and have actually occurred in practice, as recorded cases evince. First, the practitioner, adopting the general principle of Parry, that the disease is essentially inflammatory, has bled, when the common vascular circulation would not bear it. Second, the practitioner, taking the pulse as the nosometer of disease, has mistaken congestion for debility, and by the use of tonics has aggravated the congestion—the true cause of the debility. In such cases, the true object being to withdraw the blood congested in the capillaries into the common vascular circulation, and the pulse not admitting of blood-letting, it will be proper to resort to diffusible stimulants, in connection with counter-irritants and local depletion;* in this manner keeping up the energies of the system, and relieving the engorged capillaries. If the pulse becomes fuller, but symptoms of congestion remain, it will be proper to resort to venesection. "If the patient expresses himself relieved, and the pulse becomes fuller and less frequent, we have encouragement to proceed, till we have relieved, in a degree, the system of the load which oppresses it."—*Stoker*.

Again, venesection is indicated when purpura hæmorrhagica is complicated with inflammatory diseases; for instance, with general acute rheu-

* The hæmorrhagic tendency in this disease is so great, that cupping and leeching cannot frequently be applied, on account of the danger of subsequent hæmorrhage from the leech-bites and scarifications. Macintosh† says, that in venesection a larger orifice should not be made than is actually necessary, as subsequent hæmorrhage frequently occurs from the vein, and difficulty is experienced in suppressing it. The practitioner can judge of the safety of local depletion, in some degree, by the appearance of the blood; if it coagulates, when it has been exhaled from the mucous membrane of the mouth, and forms crusts which tenaciously adhere to the mucous surface, there can be no danger from such depletions. These phenomena of the blood evince an inflammatory diathesis, and indicate, in the opinion of Dr. James Johnson,‡ the safety of venesection.

† Macintosh's Practice.

‡ Med.-Chirurgical Review, July, 1838. Pp. 213.

matism, as in the following cases, communicated by Dr. J. S. Combe to Dr. Macintosh, of Edinburgh:—

"A remarkable case of purpura was pointed out to me (says Dr. Combe) by the late Dr. Kellie. The subject was a brewer's servant, big and plethoric, who, on the fourth day of an attack of acute and general rheumatism, was found covered with bright petechial spots; he also discharged some blood from the bowels. Active depletion was had recourse to, and he made a quick recovery." Dr. Combe states that he lately saw a robust girl, aged 5, who had been attacked with a violent convulsive fit, and on recovery complained of severe pain of the head. "In a few hours I saw her, and as smallpox prevailed in the neighborhood, her friends considered it as such, and pointed out some spots on the skin; they were, undoubtedly, petechial, and covered nearly the whole body, with smart fever and vomiting. On the 3d day the extensor muscles of the head were so painful that she could not bend it forward without much suffering; in a few hours this was followed by acute pain of all the larger joints. The spots on the 5th day were fainter in color, and disappeared in a few days after; but eight days more elapsed before the rheumatic affection subsided. She was treated actively by venesection and purgatives."*

(To be continued.)

OF THE COLOR, FORM, FEATURES, &c. OF THE FUTURE OFFSPRING.

BY SAMUEL FISH, M.D.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

THERE are fixed laws and a cause for everything; for the globes which move in the heavens, and the dust which floats in the air—for the light which is reflected from the planetary worlds, and the color and tints of the whole of nature's productions. The universe is a vast machine, in which one thing puts another in motion, and that another, like some little wheel, which after it has received an impulse from a different power, puts a complicated machine in operation. We are all aware that the heavenly bodies revolve in their respective orbits by means of laws which never vary, but we are not so conscious that there is an unerring cause for the color, form, and features of every infant and every animal that is ushered into the world.

Let us look at this thing a little farther. And, first, let us inquire what it is that causes such a variation in this respect in the human species, so that out of the innumerable multitudes that populate the earth, no two persons can be found who exactly resemble each other. But very little attention has been paid to this subject; yet we have some data from whence we may obtain tolerably accurate testimonials. The ancient patriarch Jacob was probably a philosopher, as well as a person who could foretell future events. That he was taught of God, matters not in regard to the reality of the thing. Whether a person becomes acquainted with the nature of things by observation and subsequent de-

* Macintosh's Practice.

ductions, or by having the veil removed and beholding them through a different medium from others, is the same thing. Material substances cannot be altered by the means. From some cause or other, this righteous person knew, that by peeling the rods of the poplar, the hazel, and the chesnut, so that there should be white and dark-colored streaks, spots, &c. in them, and placing them in the gutters and watering troughs, when the flocks and herds came to drink, the eyes of the cattle would be upon the rods, and that when they conceived they would bring forth ring-streaked, speckled or grizzled, according to his desires.

The common people are sometimes philosophers, or philosophers in some things. Farmers, by being continually among their flocks and herds, have learned some facts which those who are accounted wise do not know. Many of them are aware that when a cow or a mare is to receive the male, a full view of him immediately afterwards will impress his likeness upon the future progeny. "Stand before my mare," said a wag upon such an occasion, "for I want to have a black colt." It is the custom among grooms, in some places, to lead the horse in front of the mare, after she has received him, that she may look at him a minute or two. The ancient Greeks, ever solicitous for the improvement of their race, hung up pictures of strong athletic men and handsome women in the apartments of their wives, that they might have effect upon their offspring.

Darwin ascribes the likeness of the progeny to the imagination of the male after coition; but, though this may have some effect, it is doubtless owing more to the female than the male. It is his opinion that the sex is formed, and the form of the features moulded, in conformation to the thoughts and imagination of the male at that time. If his thoughts run upon a handsome female, the sex and external appearance will be determined by such thoughts.

That the color, form, and features are, in some measure, more or less determined and produced by the objects with which the female is associated from the period when gestation commences, until it is determined, is proved from the following facts and circumstances. Some twenty or twenty-five years ago, a relative of mine purchased a yoke of oxen, one of which was perfectly white. There was not another creature of this color in the whole town, and not another in the herd to which this now belonged that had scarcely a particle of white belonging to it. Notwithstanding this, a cow that stood by the side of this creature during the winter succeeding the purchase, had a calf which perfectly resembled him in form and color. I have remarked myself, and others have done the same, that women who have the care of, or are in the presence of, very sick persons during the months of gestation, have children with distorted features, and other resemblances of the sick person. An acquaintance of mine had a man in his employ, whom his wife, from a number of disagreeable attributes belonging to him, disliked so much that she said she perfectly hated him. She could not express her antipathy in terms strong enough to correspond with her feelings. He was a singular featured person, differing as widely in this respect from any of the family, as two persons of different and distinct nations. Not-

withstanding this, a daughter of this woman, born during the period of his service, resembled him so perfectly in her external appearance, that even after she was twenty years old, all who were acquainted with them made frequent remarks about it.

One fact more, out of a great number which might be adduced, will be mentioned to prove that the marks of the future offspring, whether brute or human, are in a great degree impressed upon it by the objects with which the female is surrounded, or by which she is accompanied. Capt. W., a near neighbor of mine, has a gray mare, which two years ago was taken to a dark bay horse. A fortnight afterwards, a friend of his, upon a visit from a distance, rode a brown mare with a very peculiar streak of white upon her face and nose, which was kept with the gray mare for ten or twelve days. About a year ago the gray mare had a foal, which had the same peculiar mark, and the same color of the other mare. The first words of Capt. W., when he saw the foal, were, "I wish B." (the person above referred to) "had kept his mare away."

From these, and many other cases, it may be inferred that the color, form, and features of both the human and brute creation, are influenced by surrounding objects. The flocks and herds of Jacob were operated upon in this way by the peeled rods of poplar, hazel and chesnut. From a similar influence the Greek women had athletic and handsome children. And from the same cause one or more children, in some families, have no resemblance to either of their parents. It is perhaps from the same cause, too, that children so often resemble one or the other of their parents, or some of their relatives. There must be something peculiar in such cases—something calculated to produce strong impressions, one way or the other—vehement love, strong hatred, deep compassion, or some other unusual affection. After all, however, persons' thoughts and feelings are so much beyond their control that it might not occur according to any one's desires, where it might be wished to exert any particular influence.

Boston, May, 1837.

MEDICAL BOTANY.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

NO. VI.—CHELONE. SNAKE HEAD.

SEX. SYST. Class didynamia; order angiospermia. *Generic Characteristics.*—*Calyx* five-parted, with three bracts; corola ringent, ventricose; *sterile filament* between the two longest stamens; *anthers* woolly; *capsule* two-celled, two-valved; *seeds* with a membranaceous margin.

Specif. Descrip.—*Chelone Glabea*. Plant smooth; leaves opposite (inferior sometimes alternate), lance-oblong, acuminate, serrate; flowers in dense terminal spikes. It grows in moist places, and flowers late in summer. Stem simple, often solitary, about two feet high; flowers

large, nearly white. It is sometimes called *Shell-flower*, from the shape of its corolla.

It is found common in the Eastern States, and is preserved by the Shakers for medicinal purposes. As a remedy, it has obtained considerable celebrity among the ignorant, for having been the favorite herb of a vagrant empiric, who was a colored man. Hence the name "*Negro herb*" has been given it. I have never known of its cures, but have often heard it extolled. It is an agreeable bitter, and doubtless valuable as a tonic. In decoction it may possibly act as a diaphoretic and diuretic, but of this I am by no means certain. Perhaps some of our country physicians are better acquainted with its properties than myself, and will inform us. The leaves and stem are the parts used, and may be given freely when mild vegetable tonics are required. S. A. T.

Cambridge, May 15, 1837.

TOOTH POWDER.

No cosmetic in the world has led to such deception and charlatanism as tooth powder. Doctors, dentists, chemists, perfumers, charlatans, and mountebanks, have all put their heads to work to find out the *panacea* so wished for; and if they search till doomsday, they never can find out a tooth powder that will do more than clean the teeth: that is—do no more good, but they may do a deal more harm, for some of them will decay and destroy the teeth. But a tooth powder, which will neither affect the teeth or stomach, can never change either the constitution or color of the teeth.

A proper tooth powder should be a fine, impalpable powder, dissolving in water, and leaving no sediment when stirred: its use should be merely as an intermediate substance between the brush and the tooth, to assist in removing the tartar that may have lodged upon them, and neutralizing the acids that may be between the teeth which the brush cannot get at; and finally, to serve as a polishing substance when the teeth are clean: these are the only uses that tooth powder can or ought to have.

Two questions are invariably asked a dentist: Is tooth powder good for the teeth? And which is the best?

To the first we give our usual answer—can you wash your hands without soap? You may rub with a towel and water, but you will not effectually remove the unctuous secretions on the hands; but the soap, forming an intermediate substance, removes it. So it is with the teeth: without powder they cannot be properly cleaned.

Which is the best powder, would be a very difficult task to decide. Most dentists prepare them; and it is reasonable to suppose, that a dentist of reputation will not give anything likely to be injurious to the teeth; and, provided they contain no acid, and are quite impalpable, they seldom do harm. But if we could not name which is the best, we shall at all events name two of the very worst, viz., soot and charcoal. It will be exclaimed, "What, soot and charcoal not good? Why, look

at the chimney-sweeps, in support of the former ; and almost every body recommends the latter."

We shall simply observe, as to the first, that what looks beautifully white in a sooty-faced chimney sweep, would look passably yellow and dirty in a young lady of eighteen. It is the contrast that makes them appear so white and the gums so ruby. Soot contains a considerable quantity of acid, and is on that score bad. We have moreover examined several chimney-sweepers' mouths, which were far from being healthy.

With respect to charcoal, and all calcined substances of the same nature, they are decidedly objectionable.

Charcoal has the peculiar property of drawing to itself all extraneous matter ; so that anything in a putrid state being surrounded by charcoal will be divested of its fetid matter, which is transferred to the charcoal. This property would, therefore, make it a very valuable article, if cleaning the teeth consisted merely in putting a piece of it into the mouth, and there allowing it to be stationary ; but being reduced to a powder, and rubbed on the teeth, some of the particles must get between, or lodged where decay may have commenced, and thus form a nucleus for collecting extraneous substances, instead of neutralizing them. If we could be sure that no particle of charcoal would remain in the interstices of the teeth, after we had rinsed our mouths, it would not be objectionable ; but, as that is impossible, a substance which has so dangerous a tendency ought to be discarded. Let any person who is in the habit of using these powders examine their teeth, and they will find there is a bluish black appearance between them that is not natural. It does not, however, follow, that all the persons who have been in the habit of using charcoal must necessarily have bad teeth : it may tend to decay them, and that is sufficient to reject it ; added to which, it is dirty.

All very deeply colored powders are objectionable ; since the coloring matter can be of no use, and may contain substances which, if not injurious to the teeth, may be so to the stomach.—*Mortimer's Observations.*

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BOSTON, MAY 24, 1837.

PROFESSIONAL OFFICIOUSNESS.

ONLY a few weeks ago, in consequence of the representation made by the profession, through a committee, to our city government, an arrangement was made by which it was thought an accurate return might be rendered to the health office, of all the deaths and the diseases which caused them. In a genuine spirit of accommodation, which has been the invariable characteristic of the present mayor's administration, and precisely as had been anticipated by the physicians, his Honor issued a

circular, in which it was shown that he was the friend of the citizens as well as the advocate of science. With an unpardonable manifestation of independence, however, altogether inexcusable, we are informed that post-mortem examinations have been made, entirely against the wishes of the friends of deceased persons—who felt that they had been grossly and unwarrantably insulted by a measure of the city government, *which required or rather permitted a physician to ascertain the cause of death.* As the impression, thus falsely gaining credence, would soon be extended, and operate most powerfully to the disadvantage of the original petitioners, the physicians, the mayor has necessarily published the following notice, which will meet the approbation of every friend to municipal order, who hails from the medical profession.

“Sir,—I have learnt with regret that, in consequence of the arrangements lately entered into, with the physicians of the city, requesting them to return to the superintendent of burials the name of the disease of which persons may have died who have had no attending physician, the bodies of such deceased persons have been, in several instances, opened and examined, for the purpose of ascertaining the nature of their complaints, against the consent of the relatives; and this has been justified, as I am informed, by the ordinance of the city council, requiring the above mentioned return.

“It could not have been anticipated that a practice so repugnant to the feelings of the community, would have been deemed justifiable on such grounds. The name of the disease cannot be thought of importance enough to warrant the government or the physician in violating feelings which, if not universal, are most extensively prevalent; and the design of the government undoubtedly went no farther than to obtain returns generally accurate, without pushing the point to a degree of minuteness and technical precision which require practices so offensive.

“I have thought it advisable to state these views of the subject to the physicians, in the hope that it might prevent the necessity of passing any order by the city council prohibiting post-mortem examinations without the consent of relatives.

“*City Hall, May 13, 1837.*”

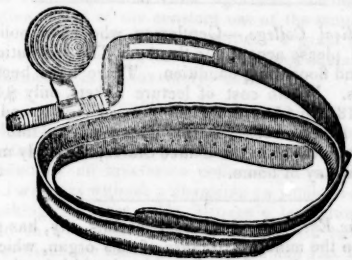
GREGORY'S TRUSS.

WHEN Chase's truss was introduced, we thought it the *ne plus ultra*, in that species of mechanism—and it may still be, for aught we can discern;—and yet an ingenious mechanic, residing in this city, calls upon us with a newly invented instrument, which is entitled to so much regard, that we are now rather perplexed to ascertain which of all the patterns in service is the best. So far as the principle of action is concerned, it is evidently the same in all the newly-invented trusses of the last dozen years; but which would soonest effect a radical cure of hernia, the ultimate object of them all, is the question. Specimens of Mr. Gregory's workmanship are left with the editor, for inspection. Those who may have been first to discover the excellencies of his inguinal apparatus over those which have, with extreme rapidity, in the order of invention, preceded it, will much oblige us by making communications upon the subject. A very large class, it is known, suffer from hernia, who will gladly avail themselves of any instrument which promises to give relief,

and place full reliance upon the advice of their physician with regard to the instrument or method of treatment.

"The theory upon which the rupture pads are formed," says Mr. Gregory, "is generally conceded to be correct; and as a modification of the hard oval or conical one has been many years in use, its application for the purpose of effecting a radical cure has been found very successful. But in cases which *cannot* be cured, a rupture pad less rigid is sometimes preferred; and for this purpose these instruments are furnished with *extra pads*, which can be changed with facility in different stages of the complaint. One important objection to most of the trusses in use, to which many physicians have adverted, is obviated in these. The spring which passes round the body is made of *untempered steel*, which can, *without injury*, be exactly fitted to the form of the patient; and as the pressure upon the hernial tumor does not directly depend upon this spring, it can be graduated at the pleasure of the wearer, which insures the necessary retentive power of the rupture pad. Much care has been taken in the mechanical execution, to render it durable and perfect.

"The practical knowledge possessed by physicians of the proper mode of treating hernia, must be the test by which the merit or inefficiency of these instruments will be decided."



The cut above represents one of these instruments for common inguinal hernia.

Disease of the Rectum.—From one of our exchange papers, we extract the following notice of a new publication in New York, which seems to be uncommonly decided in its praises. We have no reason to doubt the qualifications of the gentleman who is the subject of these wholesale doses of panegyric stimulus, although the expediency of smothering a man with kindness, is questioned. If a copy of the work could be circulated hereabouts, it is possible that the propriety of all this *beating the bush* might be understood.

"This is a plain, clear, and concise treatise upon a class of diseases, in which are comprised many of the most painful and disagreeable affections to which 'flesh is heir to.'

"Dr. Bushe has, in this instance, supplied in the most happy and perfect manner, a desideratum which has long been felt by the medical profession. The work is accompanied by a volume of plates, which, correctly drawn and elegantly engraved and colored, illustrate to the meanest comprehension the text of the talented and experienced author. We

cannot doubt that the profession, not merely of this city, but of the whole country, will eagerly patronize the publication of a work of so much practical utility; one so eminently calculated to improve the practice of a branch of surgical science, and to relieve many of the severest ills of suffering humanity.

"The pleasure and gratitude, however, with which we hail the appearance of this useful and able treatise, is very much qualified by our profound and sincere regret at the present condition of its distinguished author, who, we lament to say, has, for a long time, been confined to a bed of sickness. No man has acquired in this country a greater reputation as a scientific and practical surgeon; but, with all his profound erudition and surgical tact, which has been exerted so successfully for the relief of thousands, he has not been able to save himself from the attacks of disease. We hope, however, that he will soon be able to resume the duties of his profession, and live, for a long time, to bless the world with his transcendent and unsurpassed judgment and skill. Our anxiety on this subject may, perhaps, be somewhat selfish, inasmuch as, independent of the high respect and admiration which we feel for the man, we do not believe that his place could be easily filled, or his loss soon supplied."

Vermont Medical College.—Gentlemen who have politely forwarded catalogues, will please accept our thanks. The institution is certainly in a healthful and flourishing condition. There have been matriculated seventeen juniors. Whole cost of lecture tickets, only \$45; graduation and diploma, \$18; and board, including wood, lights, and washing, from \$2,50 to \$2,87 1-2 per week; so that a man may go into Vermont, from any of the Atlantic towns in the United States, and study medicine cheaper than he could stay at home.

Anatomy of the Eye.—Dr. Alexander, of this city, has prepared a curious paper upon the minute structure of this organ, which will perhaps require a double number of the Journal, should it be thought advisable not to divide the manuscript into two parts. It was our intention to have commenced it next week, but the obligations we are under to those whose articles have already been on hand a considerable time, may perhaps render it absolutely necessary to defer the doctor's communication two weeks longer.

Boylston Prize Questions.—It is strongly suspected that a very peculiar manifestation of talent will be exhibited in the writings of the competitors the present year. If *voluminousness* is an evidence of thought and originality, as it certainly is of patience and mechanical labor, the anticipations of the medical public will suffer no disappointment.

Scientific and Literary Journal.—With some trifling modifications this is the Journal formerly conducted by ourselves, under the title of *Scientific Tracts*. On the 1st and 15th of each month, it has a regular publication. Even to physicians, it would be a welcome visitant, from the circumstance that it embraces the consideration of facts in all the sciences.

New Plant in the Pharmacopæia.—Mr. Foote recently read a paper to the London Medico-Botanical Society on the *chimaphila corymbosa*, a plant lately admitted into the new edition of the Pharmacopæia (the *pyrola umbellata* of Bigelow and others), long and extensively used in the United States, where it is abundant, chiefly in shady woods. Various virtues are attributed to it, but it appears to be very analogous to *uva ursi* in its qualities. It is a powerful diuretic, and an infusion, sweetened with sugar, is very serviceable in the strangury of gonorrhœa. Its diuretic properties also make it very useful in anasarca and other dropsies, and Dr. Mitchell has found it valuable in intermittent fever and rheumatism, applied locally. It is also said to relieve toothache. It is generally employed in the form of a strong decoction.—*London Lancet*.

Anatomical Models.—We have much pleasure in calling attention to a collection of moulds, of a novel nature, representing various portions of the human structure, on a plan which is calculated to render them peculiarly serviceable to teachers and students of anatomy. They do not, indeed, possess all the beauty, or the precision of details, to be found in various preparations in wax, but they fully compensate for any deficiency in this respect by their lightness, elasticity, and hardness. These qualities permit of the constant use of the mould without any fear of injury, a circumstance which gives them a great superiority over all the works of this kind which have hitherto been submitted to our inspection. Dr. Rameaux is the inventor.—*Ibid*.

Medical Miscellany.—Smallpox has excited considerable alarm at Detroit.—The theory that coffee prevents the growth of the body, is most terribly assailed by all inveterate coffee-drinkers.—The town of Ellsboro', New Jersey, is without a physician; a similar vacancy exists in the town of Washington, Mass.—Dr. Mussey's temperance prize essay has been printed in a compact 12mo form, and will have a wide circulation.—Preparations are making at the Eye and Ear Infirmary, Bowdoin square, to put the buildings in a condition to receive patients from abroad. The bounty of the Commonwealth came very opportunely.—We understand that a large work on Theory and Practice is in a state of forwardness by an eminent ex-professor, in this neighborhood.—Will the editor of the Dublin Journal, when he receives this notice, re-arrange matters so that we may obtain his in exchange, with some degree of regularity. Each package should be in Liverpool three days, at least, before the sailing of a New York packet.—The East India Medical Journal seems to have been suspended—as a number has not been brought to this port for many months, although Calcutta vessels are frequently arriving here.—The United States Medical and Surgical Journal, New York, we presume has also been stopped.—Dr. James R. Dickinson, of Selma (Alab.), was recently killed by being stabbed.—James Thompson, of Philadelphia, lost his life by the carelessness of an apothecary, who gave the unfortunate sufferer *arsenic* for *cream of tartar*!—Professor Silliman has been elected professor of chemistry and pharmacy in Transylvania University, at Lexington, Ky. But his removal there, from New Haven, is very problematical.—Arrived, from London, Dr. T. W. Parsons, of Boston.—The Annual Meeting of the Mass. Med. Society takes place on Wednesday next, May 31. Discourse by Dr. G. Hayward, of Boston.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—The Communications of Drs. Comstock and Gallup are reserved for next week.

DIED.—In New York, George McCartney Bushe, M.D., aged 38.

Whole number of deaths in Boston, for the week ending May 20, 34. Males, 15—Females, 19.
Consumption, 5—Inflammatory fever, 1—phthisis, 1—dropsy, 2—ascites, 2—pleurisy fever, 2—dropsy of the head, 1—pleuritis, 1—intemperance, 1—dropsy in the chest, 2—scirrhus of stomach, 1—Inflammation of the lungs, 1—old age, 1—disease of the brain, 2—infantile, 1—dropsy on the brain, 2—drowned, 2—stillborn, 2.

THEODORE METCALF—APOTHECARY,

NO. 33 Tremont street, ten doors north of the Tremont House, devotes his chief attention to compounding prescriptions; and assures physicians that, in his establishment, no persons will be entrusted with this duty, except those of skill and experience, and no articles used but those of the best quality.

T. M. keeps no quack medicines, but chooses to rely for support upon regular practitioners and their patients. He is permitted to refer to Drs. Jackson and Reynolds.

May 24.

3m

AMERICAN MEDICAL LIBRARY.

THIS Library is edited by Prof. Dunglison, published in semi-monthly Nos. of 198 octavo pages each, making in a year 3393 pages—being nearly 200 pages more than any other Library published, and elegantly printed. 16 pages of the work are devoted to medical intelligence, and 112 pages to a republication of some work of standard character. The three first Nos. contain Wardrop on Blood-letting, 74 pages; Wardrop's Morbid Conditions of the Blood; Stokes's Theory and Practice of Medicine, 152 pages printed; Brodie's Nervous Affections, 74 pages; Itard on Deafness, 92 pages; Formulary of New Medicines. Among the works imported for the Library are, Guy's Hospital Reports, St. Thomas's do., Collins's Treatise on Midwifery, Cormack on Creosote, Mayo's Pathology, Keiborski's Auscultation, Plunbe on the Skin, Cooper's Surgery, Latham's Clinical Medicine, Dewson's Study of Medicine, Fletcher's Physiology, Newnham's Disorders of Literary Men, Cowan's Manual, Bright and Addison's Physic, Macrolin's Introduction, Hodgkin's Lectures, Travers on Constitutional Irritation, &c. Price \$10 per annum.

"For the credit of our common country, for the great and manifest advantages to be derived from the laborious research and industry of Dr. Dunglison, we hope the Library and Intelligencer will live and go down to future times.—*Boston Med. and Surg. Jour.*

The Medical Profession are invited to examine the work at our Rooms, 121 Washington street.
May 24—3t

WEEKS, JORDAN, & CO.

TO MEDICAL STUDENTS.

H. A. DEWAR, M.D. Intends forming a class for the study of Dentistry, in every branch. The number will be limited, and each student will have an opportunity of becoming practically acquainted with all the operations and manipulations requisite. Dr. D. has provided a large and commodious work-room for their exclusive use. Further particulars may be learned by calling on Dr. Dewar, No. 1 Montgomery Place.

15—Oct. 19

Boston, Oct. 7, 1836.

VACCINE VIRUS.

PHYSICIANS in any part of the United States may hereafter be furnished with pure vaccine virus, by addressing the editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal—*inclosing one dollar*. Letters must be post-paid, or they will not be taken from the Post Office. The virus will invariably be sent by the first mail, unless some other mode of conveyance is directed. Ten charged quills, an ample quantity for meeting any sudden emergency, and certainly sufficient to propagate a supply from, will be securely packed in a letter. The gentleman who has undertaken to keep the virus, will faithfully supply that which is positively genuine and recently taken. It will also be furnished on application at the Medical Journal office.

RETREAT FOR INVALIDS.

THE profession is respectfully informed that Dr. A. H. WILDER has purchased a large and convenient house in the pleasant town of Groton, Mass., likewise suitable carriages, horses, saddles, &c., for the accommodation of nervous invalids.

April 12—3t

TO MEDICAL STUDENTS.

THE undersigned are associated for the purpose of instructing in all the branches of Medicine and Surgery. A suitable room will be provided, and pupils will have the use of an extensive medical library, opportunities for seeing the practice of one of the districts of the Dispensary and of the Eye and Ear Infirmary, and of attending a course of lectures on the diseases of the eye.

A regular course of recitations and examinations will include all the required professional works. Anatomical instruction and private dissection will form a prominent part in the study of the pupils. For further information, apply to either of the subscribers.

JOHN JEFFRIES, M.D.

R. W. HOOPER, M.D.

JOHN H. DIX, M.D.

Franklin Street, Nov. 9, 1836.

N16—tf

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL is published every Wednesday, by D. CLAPP, JR. at 184 Washington Street, corner of Franklin Street, to whom all communications must be addressed, *post-paid*. It is also published in Monthly Parts, each Part containing the weekly numbers of the preceding month, stitched in a cover. J. V. C. SMITH, M.D. Editor.—Price \$5.00 a year in advance, \$3.50 after three months, and \$4.00 if not paid within the year.—Agents allowed every seventh copy *gratis*.—Orders from a distance must be accompanied by payment in advance, or satisfactory reference.—Postage the same as for a newspaper.